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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Report by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari on situation in Iraq calls for major mobilization of resources to deal with "deep crisis" in agriculture and food, water, sanitation and health.

- Secretary-General designates Edouard Brunner of Switzerland as Middle East Special Representative.

- Secretary-General says "historic opportunity" for negotiations on dismantling of apartheid in South Africa "must succeed".

- United Nations Resident Coordinators in Iran and Turkey call for additional funds to help Iraqi refugees arriving in the two countries from Iraq.

- Thirty-two Governments pledge $8.8 million to United Nations trust funds and programmes for southern Africa.

- Malawi appeals to international community for emergency assistance for 100,000 people affected by floods and land slides.

- Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan holds talks with Soviet authorities on settlement of Afghan conflict; meets also with Pakistani Foreign Minister.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar presented today a report to the Security Council by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari describing the "extremely serious" situation in Iraq.

The report stated that a major mobilization of resources was urgently needed to deal with aspects of the "deep crisis" in the fields of agriculture and food, water, sanitation and health.

The situation also raised urgently the question of energy before immediate humanitarian needs could be dealt with. The report said the need

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for energy included emergency oil imports and the quick patching up of electricity production capacity, in order to preserve and distribute food, purify water, irrigate crops, and distribute medicaments.

It was "unmistakable", the report concluded, that the Iraqi people might soon face a further imminent catastrophe, including famine and epidemic, if life-supporting needs were not rapidly met.

During consultations this afternoon Council members also discussed the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), and were presented with the Secretary-General's choice for Special Representative to the Middle East.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar today designated Edouard Brunner of Switzerland as Special Representative to the Middle East. In assuming the post, Mr. Brunner succeeds Gunnar Jarring who was appointed in 1967.

The appointment comes in response to resolution 242 (1967), by which the Security Council asked the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in the resolution.

A national of Switzerland, Mr. Brunner is at present his country's Ambassador to the United States.

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The Secretary-General said today in a statement that this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was being observed at a time when the Government of South Africa had made serious strides towards dismantling the system of apartheid. Through negotiations, he said, it should be replaced with a system based on the principles of equality, democracy and the rule of law.

The process, however, would be complex and difficult, he said. The release of all political prisoners, and the return of political exiles without restrictions, were obstacles which would have to be overcome in the near future if the process of negotiations for a new constitution was to succeed.

The Secretary-General also expressed concern about the violence, and what he termed "the grave social injustice" inflicted by apartheid on the black population in South Africa.

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In closing, he said the most recent initiatives of President de Klerk, together with the statesmanship and the foresight displayed by the black leadership, were encouraging signs showing that a common vision for a new South Africa was materializing.

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United Nations Resident Coordinators in Iran and Turkey told correspondents in Geneva today that more money was needed to help refugees arriving in the two countries from Iraq.

According to a United Nations press officer in Geneva, the United Nations Coordinator in Iran had reported that there were now about 37,500 Iraqis in camps in the country. Between 1,500 and 2,000 were arriving daily and the numbers were increasing. The refugees -- mainly women and children and old men -- were in very poor physical condition.

The press officer reported that the Resident Coordinator in Turkey had called for another $3 million to urgently expand facilities to accommodate an expected 20,000 refugees from Iraq, in addition to the 4,500 Iraqi refugees who had already crossed the border to Turkey.

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Thirty-two Governments yesterday made pledges and contributions totalling some $8.8 million for various United Nations trust funds and programmes for southern Africa.

The donations were received by the Secretary-General at a ceremony held each year in connection with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Day commemorates an incident on 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, in which 69 peaceful demonstrators against South Africa's "pass laws" were killed and 180 others wounded.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General gave an overview of the United Nations funds for southern Africa and thanked Governments for their pledges. He said the steady flow of resources to the funds indicated the commitment by Governments to the cause of peace and well-being of the peoples of southern Africa.

Last year, 36 Governments contributed a total of $12 million to the increasing needs of the trust funds and programmes.

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The Government of Malawi today made an appeal for some $23 million for emergency assistance to help 100,000 people suffering as a result of floods and landslides in the country.

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The appeal was issued by the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) who reported that an estimated 1,000 people had died in Malawi as a result of the disaster.

According to UNDRO, schools, clinics, houses and bridges had been washed away and a considerable amount of roadway was nonfunctional.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Benon Sevan, has returned to Islamabad from Moscow where he held talks with Soviet authorities on a political settlement of the Afghan question. Since his return to Islamabad last Monday, Mr. Sevan has met with the Pakistani Foreign Minister and today he called on the President of Pakistan. Mr. Sevan will continue his consultations with Afghan resistance leaders over the weekend.

Meanwhile, the Government of Afghanistan has urged the Secretary-General to take immediate measures to prevent what it called "the grave consequences" that could come from recent Pakistani attacks on the country.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 19 March, the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdul Wakil, said Pakistani forces had launched a rocket and artillery barrage followed by a ground offensive along the border earlier this week. He claimed his Government's right to self-defence, and said it would request an emergency meeting of the Security Council to deal with the situation if the attacks continued.

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